



R. Gerald McMurtry

Director, The Lincoln National Life Foundation

Editor, Lincoln Lore

ADDRESSES ON ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Addresses on Lincoln for Special Groups

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R. Gerald McMurtry

UNIVERSITY CONVOCATIONS

"If Lincoln Were Here"

LUNCHEON CLUBS

"The Why and the How of Lincoln"

CHURCH ASSEMBLIES

"Lincoln's Religion"

HISTORICAL AND PATRIOTIC GROUPS

"The Gettysburg Address"

WOMEN'S MEETINGS

"Nancy Hanks—The Mother of Lincoln"

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

"The Personal Finances of Abraham Lincoln"

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

"Cooper Union—Lincoln's Political Rebirth"

1956-4 (1)

THE LINCOLN CONTACTS OF R. GERALD McMURTRY

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Louis A. Warren

The stature of Abraham Lincoln grows year by year as new facts about him and his family are discovered and the magnitude of his task as chief executive of the nation becomes more clearly defined. Accepted as the personification of our American democracy the story of his life and works becomes an appropriate theme for any group of citizens at any season of the year. However, the speaker in this present day who proposes to address an audience on the sixteenth President of the United States must be well posted on all the facts of his life and able to open a new treasury of authentic information about him. Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation, has many valuable qualifications which allow him to measure up to this exacting requirement. Possibly a somewhat detailed account of his accomplishments would be more appropriate in introducing him rather than a highly complimentary personal tribute which it would be possible to prepare with little effort.

The early life of Dr. McMurtry was spent in the environs of the Kentucky Lincolns. He was born in Elizabethtown, Hardin County where the parents of Abraham Lincoln first went to keeping

house and where their first child, a daughter, was born. Some of his relatives lived on the same farm on Knob Creek once in possession of the Lincolns when Abraham was a boy. Dr. McMurtry as a young man in the employment of the Kentucky State Highway Department assisted in resurveying the Knob Creek road over which Thomas Lincoln was a supervisor in 1816 then living on an adjacent farm. When Thomas Lincoln returned to Kentucky after the death of his first wife, he chose as a new mate the widow Johnston who lived at that time on the same lot in Elizabethtown where later on stood the boyhood home of Dr. McMurtry.

At Centre College, the Alma Mater of John T. Stuart, Lincoln's first law partner, Dr. McMurtry received the A.B. degree in 1929 and later in 1953 the college conferred the degree of Litt. D. upon him. Iowa Wesleyan College also honored him with LL D. degree in 1946. Two years after his graduation from Centre, where he had majored in history, he accepted the position as librarian of the Lincoln National Life Foundation. The four years which he spent as librarian of the Foundation from 1931 to 1935 might be called his apprenticeship in the field of Lincolniana. This interest he has persistently pursued all these years until he has become one of the nation's best informed men on the Lincoln subject. In 1937 he became the Director of the Department of Lincolniana at the Lincoln Memorial University at Harrogate, Tennessee. Here he inaugurated an accredited course of study on Abraham Lincoln which he taught for twelve years. Other subjects in American history which he directed gave him an excellent background for the Lincoln period and also an opportunity to specialize on phases of the Civil War.

Possibly Dr. McMurtry is best known among Lincoln students as the former editor of the *Lincoln Herald*, the only magazine devoted exclusively to Lincolniana, and widely circulated among universities, public libraries and historically minded scholars. He has also contributed a great many Lincoln monographs to historical and popular magazines, and is also the author of a number of books and pamphlets. The titles of some of the more important ones are noted chronologically on the last page of this pamphlet.

One of the organizations in which Dr. McMurtry has been especially active is the Civil War Round Table. He is a member of both the groups at New York and Chicago and has addressed other units of this organization throughout the country. He has also accompanied Civil War students on the famous battlefield tours. Dr. McMurtry is a member of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and his historical interests have reached back into the period represented by this group. He is a life member of the Filson Club of Louisville, Kentucky and well informed on the history of that state.

The chief contribution, however, which Dr. McMurtry has made to Lincolniana has been the gathering at Lincoln Memorial University what is said to be the largest collection of literature pertaining to the Civil War period to be found in any college or institution of higher learning.

Having been continuously engaged in the study of Abraham Lincoln and contemporary history for the past twenty-five years, Dr. McMurtry is well qualified to speak with authority on almost any phase of the Lincoln saga.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS
PUBLISHED BY THE SPEAKER

The Lincolns in Elizabethtown, Kentucky

The Influence of Riley's Narrative upon Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln Knew Shakespeare

*The Lincoln Migration from Kentucky to Indiana
1816*

*A Series of Monographs Concerning the Lincolns
and Hardin County, Kentucky*

The Department of Lincolniana of Lincoln Memorial University

The Kentucky Lincolns on Mill Creek

Let's Talk of Lincoln

The Lincoln Log Cabin Almanac

A Great Lincoln Collection

Ben Hardin Helm, "Rebel" Brother-in-law of Abraham Lincoln with a Biographical sketch of his Wife and an Account of the Todd Family in Kentucky

Poet and President—Riley's Estimate of Lincoln

Lincoln and the Hutchinson Family Singers

Lincoln's Friend, Douglas

The Harlan-Lincoln Tradition at Iowa Wesleyan College

Why Collect Lincolniana?

Lincoln's Other Mary (In collaboration with Olive Carruthers)



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SPEAKING APPOINTMENTS

Information about Dr. McMurtry's speaking engagements may be obtained from any General Agent of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company or at the Home Office of the Company in Fort Wayne, Indiana.